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ABSTRACT

Canada is a nation replete with telecommunication technology. To control the growing potentials and risks inherent in the increased use of television, radio, and communication satellite technology, in 1969 the Canadian government created the Department of Communications. Its duties include planning, promotion, coordination, and regulation. In addition, the Canada Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission, a 19-member board that reports to Parliament, has been broadly empowered to regulate and license, and it has the goal of creating a single unified broadcasting system for the entire country. Canadians must determine how they can strike a balance between global understanding and isolationism, between centralization and community control, and between entertainment and objective reality. (EMH)

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Introductory notes
for panel discussion
on COMPARATIVE POLICY STRUCTURES
by PIERRE JUNEAU

FOURTH ANNUAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS
POLICY RESEARCH CONFERENCE

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Experts agree that the course of the latter part of this century will be largely determined by electronic communications, in the same way that the Stone Age lived by the flint and the polished stone. All their tentative forecasts indicate that we are entering an age that will be largely dedicated to telecommunication, telecontrol and teleprocessing.

In Canada, because of the multiplicity of the communications components, the complexity of the organization and because of the role of entrepreneurs, telecommunications and broadcasting systems force us, day by day, to plunge further into the twenty-first century.

In a country which, like the U.S., spans a continent, and where distances are vast and the winters rigorous, communications have always played a vital role. It was only five years ago that Canadians finally relinquished to the Americans the title of

world champion telephoners, from the point of view of both frequency and duration of calls.

Canada obviously does not have as many broadcasting stations as the United States. However before reviewing the figures let's have a quick look at the number of stations per population in Canada and in various countries of the world. The following table is indicative:

POPULATION PER TELEVISION TRANSMITTER*			
Country	Population (millions)	Total number of VHF and UHF stations	Number of persons per television transmitter
Switzerland	5	151	33,113
Canada	22	592	37,162
Sweden	8	212	37,735
Australia	9	131	68,702
U.S.A.	180	927	194,175
U.K.	54	212	254,716
France	45	173	260,115
West Germany	55	176	312,500
Argentina	21	33	636,363
U.S.S.R.	218	167	1,305,390

*Television Factbook (Television Digest: Washington, D.C., 1973-74).

The actual situation can be described as follows: Between the Atlantic and the Pacific there are approximately 2,050 broadcasting undertakings in operation, and 728 television undertakings, including 102 stations and 626 retransmitters. Almost all are affiliated

with one or another of the five Canadian television networks, two of which are French and the other three English. Suffice it to add that four American television networks also have a share of the Canadian market for you to picture the potentialities, the advantages and the thorny problems that inevitably follow in the wake of television.

As for radio broadcasts, 369 AM radio stations, 101 FM stations and 329 low-power relay transmitters theoretically reach 98 per cent of the Canadian population.

Lastly, 444 cable television undertakings offer their services to more than 70 per cent of all Canadian homes and actually serve close to 40 per cent of all households. Two out of five Canadian homes are therefore connected to cable television, and in British Columbia this proportion rises to three out of five. Eight companies boast more than 100,000 subscribers each. There is a vast difference between all these networks, from the 300 subscribers in the single Newfoundland network to the network of 70,500

subscribers in Montreal or the network of 163,500 subscribers in Vancouver.

Let us consider now the diversity within this broadcasting system.

First of all, there is the linguistic diversity, expressed for instance through two French-language and three English-language television networks, two CBC English-language networks and two French-language networks. There are also a multitude of private radio stations operating either in English or in French.

In 1973, the Canadian Broadcasting system had a combined income of 491 million dollars in advertising revenue and 324 million dollars in public funds. The 324 million in government grants, plus approximately 55 million dollars in advertising revenue, finance the operation of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which maintains two television networks, one French and the other English, and four radio networks, two French and two English.

To these must be added the two regional educational television networks - one operating mainly in English in Ontario,

more precisely in Toronto and Ottawa, and the other operating in French in the Province of Quebec, that is in Montreal and Quebec City.

In addition to the traditional radio links maintained chiefly by telephone companies, Canada also possesses three domestic communications satellites, the Anik satellites which, among other functions, enable the CBC television networks to reach the northernmost regions of Canada, thanks to twenty-four television receiving stations.

It should be pointed out that with or without cable, in Vancouver as in Southern Ontario, in Winnipeg as in Montreal, - in short, in the case of approximately 50 per cent of the population - American programs are received as readily as domestic ones. Toronto, for example, receives six American stations broadcasting from Buffalo. The situation would remain substantially unchanged if we had a live broadcasting satellite in the North American sky.

Fifty per cent of Canada in fact is already virtually living in the era of the live broadcasting satellite.

It was this complex situation - presenting both the risks and potentialities inherent in mass electronic communications - that the 1968 Canadian Broadcasting Act was designed to regulate. At the same time, the Canadian Radio-Television Commission was created by Parliament to administer the implementation of the Act's provisions.

A large part of all telecommunications and all of broadcasting in Canada come under the jurisdiction of the federal Parliament.

In 1969 the Government of Canada created a Department of Communications headed by the Minister of Communications. The Minister is responsible for introducing legislation affecting the field of broadcasting and telecommunications. He or she - at the moment the Minister is a woman - answers in Parliament for all communications matters except matters affecting the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which comes under another minister, the Secretary of State, who in the federal Government is responsible for cultural policy and all federal cultural institutions - except the broadcasting regulatory agency the CRTC which comes under the Minister of Communications! As you can see the British influence on Canadian

institutions is not completely lost!

The Department of Communications is responsible for overall communications policy and the Minister answers in the House for all federal agencies in the field of communications.

They include the regulatory agency, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission or CRTC; Teleglobe, the corporation responsible for overseas telecommunications; and the Telesat Corporation which operates a domestic satellite communications system.

The Department of Communications' Act describes the responsibilities of the Minister as follows:

- (a) coordinate, promote and recommend national policies and programs with respect to communication services for Canada, including the Canada Post Office;
- (b) promote the establishment, development and efficiency of communication systems and facilities for Canada;

- (c) assist Canadian communication systems and facilities to adjust to changing domestic and international conditions;
- (d) plan and coordinate telecommunication services for departments, branches and agencies of the Government of Canada;
- (e) compile and keep up to date detailed information in respect of communication systems and facilities and of trends and developments in Canada and abroad relating to communication matters; and
- (f) take such action as may be necessary to secure, by international regulation or otherwise, the rights of Canada in communication matters.

The Minister of Communications is also responsible for the administration of the Radio Act which prescribes that no one in Canada will operate an apparatus for radiocommunication without a licence from the Minister of Communications or in the case of broadcasting and cable, without a technical certificate.

Licences for broadcasting and cable are granted under the 1968 Broadcasting Act by the Canadian Radio-Television and

Telecommunication Commission but must be accompanied by a technical certificate granted by the Minister of Communications.

This brings us to a description of the CRTC. Up to the spring of '76 the CRTC was responsible only for the supervision and regulation of broadcasting and cable. Recently through an Act of Parliament it has become responsible for regulating also all telecommunications except some telephone companies representing approximately 20 per cent of telephone operations in Canada. These come under the authority of provincial governments.

The Broadcasting Act of 1968 which is still in force boldly calls the complex agglomeration of broadcasting institutions, systems, functions and conflicting influences a "single... Canadian broadcasting system" comprising public and private elements, English language and French language elements, and, last but not least complexity, hertzian and cable transmission.

The CRTC is of course an official body. However, it answers to Parliament and not to the government in power; even though its members are appointed by the latter for

a period that varies from five to seven years, during which they are virtually irremovable. Since the recent legislative decisions the CRTC has 19 members. Nine full-time members and 10 part-time members. Briefly, the 9 full-time members are responsible for licencing and rate control matters. The full Commission is responsible for general policy matters.

The government may issue directions to the Commission in certain exceptional cases that are clearly specified by the Act. These directions have to do with

- (i) the maximum number of channels or frequencies for the use of which broadcasting licences may be issued within a geographical area designated in the direction,
- (ii) the reservation of channels or frequencies for the use of the Corporation or for any special purpose designated in the direction, or
- (iii) the classes of applicants to whom broadcasting licences may not be issued or to whom amendments or renewals thereof may not be granted.

Such directions to the Commission must be tabled in the House of Commons within fifteen days after they have been issued.

The CRTC must participate in the definition and supervision of and promote public debate on broadcasting matters of general interest, whether relating to the structure or the role of the broadcasting system.

In practice, this means that in the broadcasting and cable area the Commission grants, modifies, renews or may suspend the licences of all broadcasting undertakings, lays down "licencing conditions" adapted to the licensee's situation, enacts regulations, carries out research on all aspects of broadcasting and, lastly, develops and formulates the system's policies. As a result, the CRTC is involved in prescribing classes of licences, establishing regulations to govern programming, advertising, political broadcasts and network affiliates and handling "such other matters as it deems necessary for the furtherance of its objects".

The Commission must also encourage more active participation on the part of the

public. It is required to announce its plans and decisions publicly in the Official Gazette and in newspapers and to offer the public and interested groups an opportunity to express their opinions in accordance with a quasi-judicial procedure. The preferred forum remains the public hearings which are held in succession in all parts of the country, thus enabling all interested persons or groups to present their arguments with a view to supporting, discussing, amending or opposing applications or draft regulations.

In the field of broadcasting every decision of the Commission is "final and conclusive". But these decisions may be appealed to the federal Court of Appeal upon questions of law or jurisdiction.

Licencing decisions in the field of broadcasting may be set aside or referred back to the Commission by the Cabinet.

In the field of telephony orders, decisions, rules or regulations of the CRTC, and its recent predecessor the Canadian Transport Commission, can be rescinded or even varied by the Cabinet on its own motion or upon petition.

I have briefly described the communication system in Canada and the policy and regulatory structure. It might be interesting to try to analyse the reasons which have inspired the establishment of these structures and the difficulties that arise in the relations between the various levels in the structure. Moreover there are discussions presently going on in Canada between the federal and provincial authorities concerning the type of cooperation that should exist between the federal and provincial governments in the field of communications. Therefore we could consider the problems that might arise if two more series of elements enter into this relationship namely ten provincial governments and an unforeseeable number of provincial regulatory bodies.

However our time is limited and I would prefer to go in another direction for the remaining few minutes.

Occasionally, some of the people involved in international communications operations feel like cursing the apparent

perversity and insularity of modern nations. Efficient systems are there, waiting only to link the globe more efficiently, and sell more goods but it is an onerous task to work out the necessary arrangements. So, I suppose, we should feel sorry for the gentleman who pleaded before a Bar Convention for

"a setting aside of the political, the prestigious, the national factors and considerations which stand in the way of the fast, ever improving, ever widening means of communication."

He continued: "Let people responsible for communications who know about communication get on with their job."

.../

So-called policy structures like the Canadian Radio-Television Commission, of course, could be said at times to be standing "in the way of fast, ever improving, ever widening means of communication". They are usually set up to be concerned with national and local factors in broadcasting.

A policy paper introduced in the House of Commons in March 1973 recognized this need to make choices in communications technologies that reflect cultural and social concerns. I quote:

"The government is... concerned to ensure that the future communications environment foreshadowed by (the) huge range of new techniques and tools should not be allowed to develop without any regard for its impact on Canadian social and cultural values and the quality of life in Canada, as well as on the Canadian economy."

Thus, while we must recognize and value an international environment in the deployment of communications, while we benefit from the

long established global capabilities of international business and technology, while we welcome and encourage administrative and technical know-how on a global scale, we must reaffirm at the same time an equal concern for the local roots and concerns of individuals of regions and of nations.

Communication is people. It occurs between individuals, or through what they create, with their hands, their voices, or their talents. It is people interacting with people, regions telling their stories to one another, people feeling the same emotions through shared experiences. It is not the exclusive property of systems engineering, huge industries, or governments. Communication, of course, does come from the entertainment industries of Hollywood, New York, Toronto or Montreal. But its origins are also found in non-mechanical, intimate and non-repetitive expressions.

For this reason we can speak of the need for a balanced environment, for a proper ecology of creativity in the design and use of our huge communications systems. The concern is voiced virtually whenever consideration is given to the creative needs of society. The thoughts,

for instance, which were expressed in a 1969 Study on the Theatre in Ontario, apply universally:

"The electronic age", it stated in its epilogue, "appears to have brought us grave dangers as well as great benefits... We are in danger of succumbing to destructive creative forces if we cannot find constructive ones, and in danger of losing our individuality in an "environment". If we are to survive the environment, we need an anti-environment -- a means of saying to each other who we are, as distinct from a means of hooking ourselves up with the all-enveloping network. If we are clever enough, we can do both."

Public regulatory bodies in the United States, in Canada and communication authorities in many countries have shown consistently a preoccupation with this need for an "anti-environment" in broadcasting, especially in their insistence on the safeguarding of a local broadcasting capability. This explains the dilemma posed by cable in North America. Here was a technology which brought in signals from outside the community,

and often does little to help local, regional or national identity. Integrating cable with broadcasting does not mean shutting communities off from the outside, or in Canadian terms, nationalizing all sources of cultural circulation.

It simply means being aware that, as the CRTC stated in a Public Announcement preceding a public hearing on cable "at stake is more than a system of national broadcasting, because broadcasting has the vital and important task of identifying and strengthening cultural entities and community loyalties."

Space communications technology, and the vastly increased and integrated flow of all kinds of messages, both private and collective on a global scale force us to consider an expanded range of public duties - in an international context.

World networking is the ultimate in effective product depreciation, in economy of scale for electronic programming. We are forced to ask ourselves if the scattered voices of nations will be really able to talk to

each other collectively when mass communications are deployed on this scale.

It is clear that we will have very little to exchange globally, unless the greatest possible number of nations can produce programming worthy of the attention and respect of the others. It will hardly be a matter of Sweden or Canada originating a "Gone with the Wind" or a "Towering Inferno" that can command a world market. Space communications will put a premium on flourishing, identifiable national and regional broadcast production.

Nations or even regions not so blessed, will be faced with a kind of broadcasting inundation from outside the borders of their experience. Pervasive communications technologies make it possible for one nation to culturally dominate its close and even its distant neighbours. Such domination is hardly conducive to the achievement of a real world community or world understanding.

It is too often glibly assumed that shared values or increased understanding are

somehow inherent in the very existence of the capacity to transmit. But surely it is evident that when cultural backgrounds differ, it is through the exchanges of individuals and through the actual works of the imagination - whether of the performing arts, the graphic arts, the cinema, or television programs, that we communicate.

The work itself is a channel, a vehicle by which we together feel the same emotions, experience the renewed knowledge of ourselves or of others. The electronic channel may provide the physical link, but it is not the vehicle of communication - the vehicle is the work itself. Shakespeare was a vehicle of world communication long before such modern and generous channels existed by which such experiences could be diffused and transmitted everywhere.

In television most countries with consistent regulatory orientation try to maintain high programming standards and freshness of approach and theme, by encouraging decentralized roots of creativity. The barriers are real between low art and high

art, between handicraft-film and television and mass-produced film and television, between quite acceptable professional performances and the "hit" system of mass acclaim. These barriers are particularly serious in North America. Can we hope to communicate internationally, or even communicate meaningfully across the 49th parallel without solving these problems at home?

In looking at the present use of international communications systems by broadcasting, I differ strongly with those who claim the automatic advent of greater understanding and more world unity as a result of technology. On the contrary, the prognosis could be very bleak indeed. For with very few exceptions, the message of international broadcasting has oscillated between frivolity and apocalypse, with little of the authentic, individual expression I have just described.

There has been up to now almost no creative input into the use of our global communications systems. In planning the system we have assumed useful content and effective use would follow. This has been an almost

self-fulfilling prophecy largely because of man's constant propensity to talk, and the needs of huge corporations for global data.

But what a squandering of a technology when we are all engulfed by each other's monetary problems yet have no idea where the other lives, or what he feels.

The world knows nothing of the contemporary social, political or historical situation of the North American Indian. But the world knows about "Wounded Knee".

The world knows little of the social or political situations which gave rise to the Tupameros, the I.R.A., or the Black September movement.

I am not arguing with the principle of bringing unpleasant realities of the world into our homes. But, to return to my original theme, I really wonder where the artist, the creator, the writer, the composer of sounds and pictures is to balance this diet, and provide a measure of shared emotions and understanding.

Contrast this somewhat purposeless use of a tremendous international communications facility by broadcasting, with its purposeful, goal-oriented, efficient use to carry the messages of world business and trade. Some years ago, Robert Sarnoff, president of RCA, called for a global market of communications, and recommended reducing national responsibility for communications so that it could be considered a "global resource". Such a development, he claimed, "would foster an increasing world-wide flood or flow of information that would bring benefits as tangible as increasing trade among countries of Western Europe. As data transmission becomes less expensive", he continued, "we will see greater use of computerized controls and long distance time-sharing to strengthen the multi-national firm as a vehicle for the transfer of technology."

Invoking the principle of free flow of information is of little use in counterbalancing the growth of unidirectional power. A strong commitment must be made to using our global systems for transferring not only

technology, but also feeling and intelligence.

Perhaps we in North America have the opportunity to understand the human dimensions of the new and pervasive relationship between communications and culture, and in doing so can take leadership in opening new possibilities for world exchange, and international community.

In the last century, we have constructed a system of highly centralized media structures, which, as I said earlier, concentrated creativity in a few large centres. This centralization and concentration brought advantages of scale to creative production of cultural works, although sometimes at the expense of cultural diversity.

A nation with no view of itself, of its own place has little to contribute internationally, let alone internal coherence.

In closing, I think I can express a general determination of Canadians to remain fully connected with international broadcasting, but connected on a two-way circuit in which the best expressions of our own diverse

nationality mingles equally with the best of other nations. This is not just our hope for a world wired together and able to instantly share anything. It is the legitimate hope of citizens of the world who want to know the person at the other end of the line.